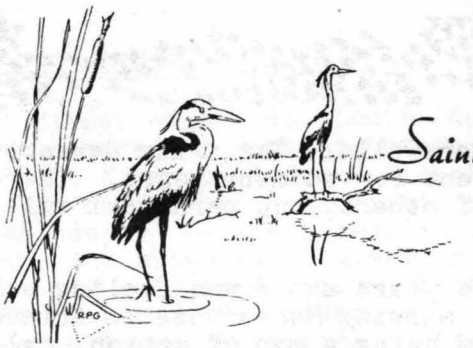

Saint Louis Audubon Bulletin

Volume 41 Number 1 Summer, 1974

EARL HATH....1901-1974

During the presidency of Earl Hath (1954 -1973) the St. Louis Audubon Society experienced unprecedented growth in membership, financial stability, activities, influence and national recognition. But Earl's accomplishments extend far beyond this. Fellow birders knew Earl as one of the best. A keen eye and ear, enthusiasm to cover the field in all weather, careful research for accurate identification... all of these were part of Earl's birding. Just as important were his human qualities that helped interest new birders. He was patient, quietly understanding, thorough.

Earl was a teacher. He sought youngsters with potential and helped them develop. He taught summer classes for children at Shaw's Garden and organized classes at Harris Teachers College, with which our members assisted. He encouraged awards to students and teachers, especially the Audubon Camp Scholarships to develop experienced adult leadership. And he taught by telephone, answering endless inquiries with patience and care.

As a boy, he was influenced by another fine teacher, Otto Widmann, who lived near him on Kensington Avenue. Mr. Widmann shared Bird Lore magazine with his eager young neighbor. He and Miss Rowena Clark began a Junior Audubon Club, second in the nation, and 13 year old Earl became president. Another great influence was Dr. Robert Terry, of the St. Louis Bird Club.

Earl Hath believed that a good ornithologist is a good conservationist. He was an active board member of Nature Conservancy, the Horticultural Council of Missouri Botanical Garden, Humane Society of Missouri, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Mayor's Committee on Beautification.

Memories of the early years when Earl was president include the $1 per head picnics at the Hall's Possum Trot Farm, Rice's conservation area in Jefferson County, the Desloge estate on the Missouri River, Principia's woods above Elsah. It may be difficult for members in these days of inflation to comprehend what a contribution these picnics made to our somewaht shaky finances. Earl went beyond this, however, to seek contributions and bequests to finance the society's growing activities and his keen interest rubbed off on others. Membership grew and new board members lent their help, responding to Earl's enthusuastic appeals.

Wherever Earl Hath was, he watched the birds... at home, in Colorado, Montana, on fishing trips in the North, in his beloved Jefferson County. During Earl's illness, his bed was at the window. Like Otto Widmann during his last illness, who asked his doctor to move him to a window where he could watch his birds, Earl marshalled his failing strength to make one last trip to Jefferson County in early May. He watched and heard the birds; had a memorable visit with several friends; and two days later was bedridden. He died at his home in the early morning of June 12.

In the churchyard of Bruton Parish in Williamsburg, Virginia, is a memorial sundial whose inscription seems to fit our feeling for the man who led us on the trails for so many years. "The shadow fell for a moment upon that hour that marked his death, then passed, leaving his name and memory illumined by the eternal sunshine."

Elizabeth Golterman - for all of us

This has become an issue of farewells. The truly devasting farewell is that to Earl Hath, our president for so many years. There is nothing I can really add to the words of others, but perhaps I will be forgiven a personal reminiscence.

When we moved back here twelve years ago I was feeling a little blue around Christmas time. I was missing Massachusetts friends, among others my fellow birders. My husband being a man of action, called the Audubon phone number -- and my life changed. Earl Hath took me along on a Christmas census to St. Charles County, the first of many such trips and the beginning of wonderful new experiences and friendships. I know I was only one of many whom Earl introduced into the great world of St. Louis birds. Earl was also responsible for my coming on to the St. Louis Audubon Board and to the editorship of the Bulletin.

Which brings me to the second farewell. This is the last issue of the Bulletin for which I will be editor. Naturally there is a mixture of regret -- and relief. Its been a fascinating job. One of the great pleasures has been the unfailing cooperation of those with whom I've worked, especially Bertha Massie and Bonnie Rice. Without them there would never have been a Bulletin. Bertha's accurate eye and steady hand have been responsible for the make-up of the Bulletin. Bonnie has had the demanding job of tending to the business details and getting the issues in the mail.

In addition both Katherine Chambers and Sallie Phillips have done the typing. Emily Norcross has also helped with make-up and contributed several delightful articles. And there are our regular contributors -- Earl Comfort on the area birding, Betty Wilson on Environmental issues and Lee Mason on Photography. I can't let the list of regular contributors go without mentioning Edgar Denison. Frequently I would call him about an article we needed, or an issue which needed to be aired -- and almost before I had hung up the phone he would be at my door (on foot !) with the completed article, (see page). Thank you all.

There is another farewell which is not really a sad one but which none the less we regret. Sally and Dick Vasse are leaving for northern Minnesota where Dick will be at the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge at Middle River. Sally has run the Christmas censuses which centered around the Mark Twain Refuge for many years. She is also one of the founders and dynamos of the Great Rivers Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society. For those of us who have been active birders we have known Sally and Dick best as the source of many exciting hot line tips on shore birds and water fowl in the area. Lots of luck, Sally and Dick -- see you in Minnesota.

Back to the Bulletin. We've tried to make it a bearer of a variety of material. There are environmental issues with which Audubon is deeply concerned (locally the Meramec Dam, L-15 levee and other potentially harmful projects). Nationally there are many issues and Betty Wilson's column often focuses on these. We've tried to expand our field of interest beyond birds to all aspects of nature and the out of doors. We've been delighted that there have been more educational projects to report, and although news of them has been somewhat crowded out this time, they are continuing. It's also a pleasure to have had several poems submitted recently. We are printing another in this issue. And finally, I have to admit to a certain amount of self indulgence in printing articles I have written and I'm doing it again this time.

But next time -- there will be new editors and they can blue pencil (or is it red ?) me. Connie Hath and Katherine Chambers have agreed to take over the Bulletin. Probably the greatest pleasure about relinquishing the job is the knowledge that I am leaving it in such capable hands.

M. C. W. (who is Mrs. William Wiese just in case you didn't know.)

SECOND ANNUAL AUDUBON DINNER

The second annual dinner of the St. Louis Audubon Society on May 20th was a gala occasion. We were honored to have as our guest, Charles Callison, Executive Vice-President of the National Audubon Society and former Missourian. While complimenting us on our position as first and one of the largest chapters of N.A.S. he also reminded us of the necessity for constant alertness to threats to the environment. He spoke particularly of the Cache River Channelization project in Arkansas, a sure threat to wintering waterfowl; of the plans for 're-arranging' the Platte River in Nebraska which would effectively destroy the staging area of a large proportion of the sandhill crane population; and of the Garrison **Diversion** Project in North Dakota which would cut down greatly on waterfowl nesting areas and do other environmental damage. (see Focus on the Environment for more on this)

If Mr. Callison provided us with the metaphorical meat of the evening, certainly Claire Condon was the dessert. Her warmth and charm of manner, the wide range of bird related songs she had assembled, and the sheer beauty of her voice all made for a delightful program. We hope she'll come again.

Marshall Magner, president, presented a book to Ed and Lee Mason in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the St. Louis Audubon Society in setting up the photography program. One result of this was seen in the prize winning exhibit which was on display after travelling around the St. Louis area for most of the year. Mr. Magner also summarized the many other accomplishments of the year and presented the new slate of officers who were duly elected. They are as follows:

President	J. Marshall Magner
1st Vice President	Leo Drey
2nd Vice President	Martin Schweig, Jr.
3rd Vice President	Edward Ortleb
Secretary	Mrs. Gerome Chambers
Treasurer	Mrs. Joel Massie

DIRECTORS Terms expire 1975
George Billy III
Miss Mabel Boss
Mrs. Edward M. Mason
Miss Sharon Miller
Mrs. Hiram Norcross Jr.
Dr. Mildred Trotter
Kurt P. Wesseling Jr.
Mrs. Edwin F. Stuessie

DIRECTORS Terms expire 1976
Earl H. Hath
Mrs. Earl H. Hath
Mrs. Warren Lammert
Donald A. Menke
Father James Mulligan
Jay G. Rice
Mrs. J. Russell Wilson

NEW DIRECTORS Terms expire 1977
William Brush
Edgar Denison
Floyd Erickson
Gary Giessow
Mrs. Allan Goodloe
Mrs. Gilbert Samuelson
Jack Van Benthuysen

Many thanks to the dinner committee: Jane Stuessie and Katherine Chambers, and their assistants Alice Bolay, Frances Pickel, Elizabeth Golterman, Elinor Hayward, Alyce Hildebrandt, and Janet Moehrman.

The Audubon Society has an answering service with the Coalition for the Environment. The number is 727-2311.

Executive Secretary

Mrs. Jay Rice
240 Blackmer Place
St. Louis, Mo. 63119
Telephone 961-0895

The use of computers and zip codes changes procedures that we have advocated in the past. When you receive your renewal notice from National, please return the punch card with your check directly to National in the envelope provided. This should eliminate delays in receiving your magazine. (We allow some lag before removing you from our local mailings!)

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Individual	☐ $12.00 per year	Supporting	☐ $ 50.00 per year
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Sustaining	☐ $25.00 per year	Donor	☐ $250.00 per year
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Your Local Chapter St. Louis Audubon Society #2602

IMPORTANT: Indicate whether this is a new membership or a renewal payment by checking the proper box.—NEW ☐ RENEWAL ☐

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Membership Fees and Contributions are tax deductible.

Focus on the Environment

BETTY WILSON

LAND USE

There has been strong support from environmental and civic organizations for the "Land Use Planning Act of 1973" - HR 10294, introduced by Morris K. Udall(Democrat-Arizona).

Major environmental protections include: 1) A requirement that among elements states must consider in the planning process are the "aesthetic, ecological, environmental, geological, hydrological and physical values and conditions...that influence the desirability of various types of land use and development"; 2) a requirement that, as a condition of eligibility for federal land use planning grants, states must develop "explicit substantive state policies to guide the use of land in areas of critical environmental concern and criteria for applying the state's policies to land use decisions in such areas", 3) a requirement that, in identifying areas of critical environmental concern, such factors as these must be taken into account: the "aesthetic and ecological value of wetlands"; "the direct and indirect costs of substantial development on flood plains and the need to restrict the hazardous, uneconomic and unnecessary use of such areas ..."; the undesirability of locating in areas of critical environmental concern facilities and developments that would tend to encourage "further development and urbanization of more than local impact."

On June 11 the House voted to reject a bill that would have permitted debate on Udall's bill as well as another land use bill introduced by Representative Sam Steiger of Arizona. This would seem to kill land use legislation for this session.

The Udall bill would have given the states $100 million a year for 8 years to carry out land planning under federal guidelines with emphasis on environmental protection. The other, a substitute bill, would have given the states $50 million a year to carry out essentially any land policies they enacted.

WELDON SPRINGS LAND USE TASK FORCE

The Audubon Society is participating in a Task Force to provide citizen input into both short- and long-range land use plans for the University of Missouri property at Weldon Springs. The Task Force will also consider land use plans for the adjacent, privately owned Howell Island. The University property is located in St. Charles County and consists of heavily-forested hills and bluffs, valleys and streams, notably Hidden Valley and the Little Femme Osage Creek, and Missouri River floodplains. The University acquired the approximately 8000 acres of land from the federal government following World War II. Howell Island is privately owned, and legal jurisdiction is now being decided in the courts between St. Charles and St. Louis counties. The island is subjected to frequent flooding and consists of 2,500 acres of heavily-forested land abounding in wildlife. Some 600 acres have been cleared for farming.

Recently, plans have been announced to develop both tracts of land. This would have a severe and tragic impact on achieving much-needed natural open space areas and parks for the St. Louis region.

The Task Force group will consider some of the following issues: 1) exact description of the area; 2) legal review of acquisition and development; 3) University of Missouri short-range developments (quarry and landfill); 4) alternatives to development; 5) future actions.

BOONDOGGLE

Charles H. Callison, executive vice president of The Audubon Society, gave a hard hitting talk against the time-honored custom of "logrolling" at the Annual Meeting of the St. Louis Audubon Society. As examples of nefarious pork-barrel schemes, he sited the Cache River Project, the Platte River Project, and the Garrison Diversion.

Cache River Project is a massive channelization program already started by the Corps of Army Engineers in Eastern Arkansas. However, a court order last Spring stopped the draglines pending a satisfactory Environmental Impact Statement. At an estimated cost of $72 Million, this project would convert 231 miles of the Cache and its tributary Bayou DeView into massive drainage ditches. In the process it would destroy the best wintering area for mallard ducks left in the Mississippi Flyway - an area where the wintering flocks number upwards of a half million birds. Some 100,000 acres of swamp hardwoods would be wiped out. "Mitigation" has been offered in the acquisition of 30,000 acres of swamp woodlands. This isn't real mitigation at all. Those 30,000 acres are already there. No new swamp will be created to take the place of the swamp to be drained and destroyed. Channelization does not really serve to control floods. It changes a meandering stream, with all of its ecological pluses, to a straight ditch. Confined and rushing water moves the floods downstream.

Platte River Project (Nebraska Mid-State Project) is a plan of the Bureau of Reclamation. This is a scheme to divert most of the water out of the Big Bend of the Platte River for the alleged purpose of supplying irrigation water to an area that already supports a prosperous agriculture, and where the farmers already use economical pump irrigation. It is supposed to recharge an aquifer that is already recharged naturally from the flow of the Platte and its tributaries. The plan would dry up and destroy some 60 to 80 miles of river-bottom habitat that is essential to three-fourths of the sandhill cranes in North America, to the remaining band of whooping cranes, and to hundreds of thousands of wild ducks and geese. Construction of the Nebraska Mid-State Project has not yet started.

Garrison Diversion is a project of the Bureau of Reclamation. It would deface much of North Dakota. What would it do, at an estimated cost of $443 million? It will destroy or severely damage seven major National Wildlife Refuges. They are the Audubon, Arrowwood, Sand Lake, J. Clark Salyer, Tewaukon, Dakota Lake and Cheyenne Lake refuges. It will wipe out other thousands of acres of prairie marshes including some nesting grounds of the endangered canvasback duck. It will pollute two rivers flowing into Canada, the Souris and the Red, in violation of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. (The Canadian Government has filed a formal protest). It will require an estimated 500 megawatts annually to power the pumping stations. It will take some 70,000 acres of farm land out of production for construction of the canals, ditches and reservoirs, chopping up thousands of family farms and making hundreds of them inoperative. For all project purposes it will require the taking of 218,500 acres.

We must let our Congressional representatives and senators know that we oppose the Boondoggle!

WILSON'S PHALAROPES

The West Central Regional Audubon Conference at Wichita, Kansas the first week-end in May, began each day with morning field trips. One to the Flint Hills northeast of Wichita tied in with the discussion of a hoped for Prairie National Park. The second trip took us to the Arkansas River where there is a threat of more channelization and an extension of the Arkansas Navigation Project, the basis of another program topic. On this same morning we visited the newly acquired Sanctuary-Nature Center which was purchased by the Wichita Audubon Society and partially financed by a bequest to that group. If that much smaller group can acquire a sanctuary, can't we?

The post-convention trip took us to Cheyenne Bottoms, just north of Great Bend. Now we can understand why the Kansas City birders always come to this area. Who would expect a 19,000 acre marshland in central Kansas? The area which is managed by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission is an outstanding water and shore bird area. Particularly memorable were the huge flocks of yellow headed blackbirds and pink tinged Franklin's gulls. It was also a pleasure to see avocets, Wilson's phalaropes, and piping plovers on their nesting territory.

Bertha H. Massie

ST. LOUIS AREA SPRING BIRDING

J. Earl Comfort

St. Louis area 1974 birding highlights during April and May featured the four St. Louis Audubon Forest Park bird walks, the two Shaw's Garden bird walks, the four Arboretum nature hikes in Franklin County, the Webster Groves Nature Study Society and Audubon Nature Outings at Sunny Ranch, the important wildlife refuge in Warren County established by Burrell and Ruby Pickering, and last but far from least, the Audubon Spring Census on May 4th.

Those reported as breaking 100 species on the Big Day Census were Jack Van Benthuysen with 137 species,Dick Anderson, 122, Kurt Wesseling, 119, Bill Rowe, 113, George and Terry Barker, 111, Jim and Marge Ruschill, 111, Tim Barksdale, 110, Joe Eades, 110, Bob Shea, 110, and Mary Wiese, 101. Several carloads of observers went well over 100 as a group. Some of the best finds in AOU checklist order were: white pleican, turkey, barn owl, scissor-tailed flycatcher, Swainson's warbler, black-throated blue warbler, and red crossbill. There were several lesser rarities. The total list for the day, compiled by Connie and Earl Hath was 190 as compared to only 176 in the 1973 May Census.

During the two month period warblers were most co-operative, resulting in 37 kinds being tabbed. Shorebirding was also exciting, with 25 species accounted for. Best shorebirds were Hudsonian godwit, ruddy turnstone and northern phalarope. Most numerous warblers were ovenbird, redstart, chestnut-sided, magnolia and black-throated green, not to mention Tennessee and myrtle, which always appear to be overly common in the warbler season.

The rarest area bird of the period was a Louisiana heron in Illinois on the 23rd of May. This candidate for the bird of the year was studied near the levees. As of June 1st 264 area species of birds had been listed. May 1974, one of our best in years of birding, contributed an unusually high number to the composite count.

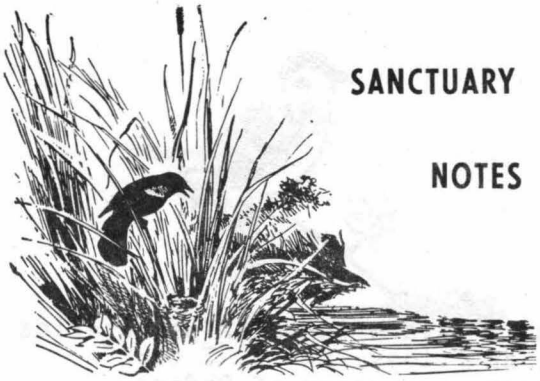
We enter the low key birding period with the end of May. Bird buffs are already anticipating exciting fall birding. In the mean time our nature outings will be more leisurely trips with greater attention being paid to other interesting offerings of nature.

HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY MOWING

A new Audubon newsletter, AUDUBON ACTION IN THE WEST CENTRAL REGION, contains information about "greatly improved highway right-of-way management" in Kansas where 100,000 acres used to be mowed four times each year. How about Missouri ? The Missouri Highway Department, an independent governmental agency, is deeply devoted to mowing and thereby destroying enormous acreage of land which could be ideal habitat for native grasses, wildflowers, wildlife and birds. While Kansas spent $2,000,000 per year on mowing we, in Missouri, recorded an operating cost of $4,144,675 in 1972 ! With unchecked inflation and the jump in gasoline prices mowing will be a great deal more expensive today. The investment in mowing equipment and repair facilities must be staggering, but figures are not available.

Let's move.....Tell Governor Bond how nuch he could do for Missouri if this patronage providing, unnecessary practice were stopped. Ask him to take personal action -- not just to forward your letter to the Highway Department. Ask him to appoint a committee to evaluate mowing and to recommend steps to cut it to a minumum. The address is: The Honorable Christopher S. Bond, Governor of Missouri, Executive Office, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65101.

Edgar Denison



SANCTUARY NOTES

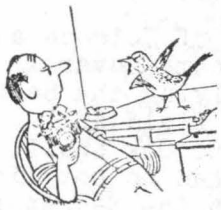
Charles Callison has informed Donald Menke, Chairman of the Sanctuary Committee, that the George Whittell Memorial Revolvong Fund can make loans without interest, to Audubon chapters for the purpose of land sanctuary acquisition. This offer of assistance in our effort to obtain a sanctuary will greatly broaden our horizons as to the money available.

To date, three sites are under study as to their potential for our sanctuary requirements. Additional submissions of potential sites are needed from our members and friends. Please get in touch with Don Menke or one of the Committee members if you know of any property that would make a good sanctuary site and may be available for acquisition. Keep in mind that proximity to St. Louis is of great importance, together with the availability of other wildlife areas nearby.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Editor's note: Since the above was written we have learned the sad news of the death of Earl Hath. There could be no more fitting memorial to Earl, who inspired so many of us with his love of the out-of-doors and his leadership, than the establishment of such a sanctuary. Envelopes for contributions for this purpose are enclosed. Make checks payable to St. Louis Audubon Society and mail to Mrs. Joel Massie, Treasurer, 6 Indian Hill, St. Louis, Mo. 63124.

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY DOINGS



July 13, 1974- Saturday - 1:00 p.m. on. ROCKWOODS RESERVATION, Pond, Missouri. Meet at Conservation Education Center. AUDUBON NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY MID-SUMMER WORKSHOP. Photography Walk at 1:00 p.m. A bring-your-own-supper at 5:30 p.m. An address in the auditorium by Randy Herberg, Area Manager of the Conservation Department on "Hunting with a Camera." Slide critique by Walter Liddell at 7:30 p.m. Bring your slides marked with your name and address. They should also have a black dot in the upper right-hand corner of mount, with slide held with image inverted, and the emulsion side away from you. NO GLASS MOUNTED SLIDES PLEASE ! Attendance will govern how many slides each person may present. If your specialty is prints, you may exhibit your photographs for discussion. Event coordinator: Charles Hill.

August 11, 1974 - Sunday - 10:00 a.m. MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN'S ARBORETUM, Gray Summit, Mo. AUDUBON NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY WALK. Meet at main gate. Bring lunch. Event leader: Charles Hill.

September 14, 1974 - Saturday - 10:00 a.m. CUIVRE RIVER STATE PARK. 5 miles east of Troy, Mo.,on State Highway 47. Meet at Administration Center. AUDUBON NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY WALK. Bring lunch. Event leader: Herman Brune. Biology expert Edgar Denison will indentify plants, etc. so we'll know what we're taking pictures of.

P.S. We're looking for bird nests to photograph -with eggs, with young, or even empty. We can be reached at 427-6311.

One of our former Audubon Camp scholarship recipients has offered to share the results of her experiences with us in a very interesting manner. Eloise Pillman has prepared a talk entitled The Web of Life illustrated with 240 color slides. It is concerned primarily with the interrelationship of all forms of life and the necessity of man's learning to live in harmony with the world of nature. Many of the slides were taken during her stay at the camp in Wisconsin. This Program is available to any group requesting it. Miss Pillman's address is 411 Hanna Rd. Manchester, Mo. 63011. Phone 527-3748

BIRDING WITH THE SECRETARY

Dick Anderson

During noon-hour walks in downtown St. Louis, I have often seen secretaries whom I would like to take birding. However, on Friday, May 3, I took birding not just a secretary, but the secretary, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger.

This all started about nine that morning when Mitzi called me at work to say I had an "emergency call" from a General Taylor in Washington, D. C. A little shook, I made the call and found Gen. Bob Taylor, who is a chief aide to the Secretary. It seems the Secretary was making a stop at St. Louis en route from Kansas back to D.C. and wanted to see the European Tree Sparrow. The General advised that the Secretary is a very serious birder and uses his hobby to relax whenever he can. An article I had written for A. B. A.* on the E.T.S. had steered him to me. I was asked if I could line up an E.T.S. around 5:30 p.m. somewhere near the airport. Not being able to guarantee this without checking, I was told I would be called in two hours by the Chief Security Officer, who was then in St. Louis.

After making many calls, I found Bill Groth at the Museum of Science and Natural History, who guaranteed breeding sparrows. Then came several calls from security officers setting up details such as flying the Secretary by helicopter from McDonnell-Douglas to the football field at Christian Brothers College and then driving three blocks to Oak Knoll. At this point I called several birding friends and attempted to hot line the news to any-one interested in meeting and birding with the Secretary. However, on such short notice we had no takers. Neither Bill nor I believed all this was really going to happen. Even so, leaving work a little early, I met Bill to get the exact location of the birds, since he could not stay.

Afew minutes to five a camera crew from Channel Two arrived and a few minutes later a car of security (CIA) people arrived. Then for over an hour I had a nice conversation with the security people and Channel Two gave up and left. Soon after we heard a chopper and a little later a Clayton police car and another security car arrived with the Secretary. We shook hands and headed for the west side of the park where I immediately heard the sparrows in the trees. The Secretary, being a very sharp birder, looked through the foliage and found his own lifer. We then spent 15 to 20 minutes studying several pairs of E.T.S. Although satisfied with a lifer, he did not take off immediately like most visiting birders, but stayed to bird the grounds for almost another hour. His personal pilot-driver, who birded with us, seemed to be a good birder also. The security people stayed at a discreet distance, but kept a sharp eye on the Secretary and the few people still in the park. The birds cooperated with many warblers, pine siskins, thrushes, a few purple finches and rose-breasted grosbeaks being seen.

The Secretary, a tall, quiet, but friendly person, impressed me with both his birding ability and knowledge. Then as the sun got low, we headed back to the parking lot. As everyone prepared to leave, the Clayton policeman, taking me for one of the security people, asked "Everything okay ?"... I answered honestly, "Yes, everything is okay."

*** A.B.A. — American Birding Association (not Bar)**

KIRTLAND'S - AND OTHER WARBLERS

RAMSHEAD - AND OTHER ORCHIDS

Mary C. Wiese

The Kirtland's Warbler, with about 200 singing males, is probably the rarest warbler in the United States.* The Kirtland's nests only in an area of 'Christmas tree-sized' Jack pines on the poorest soil in Michigan, near Grayling. When it was announced that the 1974 meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society would be held at the University of Michigan Biological Station, 80 miles north of Grayling, Bertha and Joel Massie, Katherine Arhos and I decided to attend.

Besides the warbler there was an additional lure. Lil Nagel and Peg Feigley had spent several fascinating summers at the Station, and David Gates and Mark Paddock, formerly of Shaw's Garden, are back there now as Director and Assistant. Lil and Peg had already migrated north for the summer, but on June 6 we met again, at Douglas Lake. We were glad to be in the company of two distinguished alumnae since most of our 250 fellow campers were professionals, or very learned amateur ornithologists, and we felt a bit outclassed.

The Station occupies 9500 acres in what is known as 'the tip of the mitten', twenty miles below the Straits of Mackinac. This is an area which was devastatingly logged in the early 1900's. Sewall Pettingill, who has directed the ornithological studies there for many years, showed a film of the birds and activities at the Station which included slides of its earliest days. (1909)-- two tents and no trees around a barren lake shore. Now the forest has recovered and although we and many others were housed in rather primitive asphalt sheathed cabins, there are some handsome new buildings and excellent facilities for a wide range of biological studies.

The wake-up chorus in the deciduous trees around the camp consists of Baltimore (sic) orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, scarlet tanagers and redstarts, with a chebec (least flycatcher) thrown in for percussion. Two miles away is Reese's Bog, an old bog which has now grown up in tall hemlock, pine, spruce, and white cedar with an understory of balsam, birch and maple. Here the warblers are in full cry at 6:00 a.m. Blackburnian, black-throated green, Nashville, black and white, myrtle magnolia, chestnut- sided, Canada and ovenbird all find their own level in the forest.

There are also several less gaudily dressed birds whose songs more than make up for their duller plumage. Both hermit thrush and veery make their territorial boundaries quite definite, as do both kinglets. I was surprised that the golden-crowned actually says anything beyond the constant see-see-see we hear in Missouri's woods. Purple finches join the less talented warblers in singing from the very tops of the conifers, and a flight of red crossbills swoops in among the cones-- and swoops out just as quickly.

*assuming that the Bachman's, unreported for several years, has now joined the ivory-billed woodpecker -- in limbo.

Perhaps the longest and most beautiful of all songs heard in the United States is that of the winter wren. As we walked slowly down the woods road, following Pied Piper Pettingill, we heard three different wrens singing from three different territories far back in the deepest part of the forest. The greatest surprise was the Cape May warbler. These birds, which we find occasionally in relatively low deciduous trees during migration, share the tips of the spruces with the Blackburnians. In order to complete the data on the first recorded nesting in Reese's Bog, Dr. Pettingill told us it was necessary to cut down the tree at the end of the breeding season since the nest was so high that it couldn't be obtained by climbing.

Spring flowers in northern Michigan are just as exciting as the birds. For example, there are three beautiful species of smilacina (false Solomon's seal). One species (s. stellata) sometimes grows on the roadsides along with indian paint brush and a large-flowered puccoon (lithospermum croceum), a strange association to Missouri eyes. More often, however, it is a part of the typical Canadian zone woodland carpet.

Dominant flowers in the carpet are three other members of the lily family: trillium grandiflora, turning pink since it was at the end of bloom, Canada mayflower or false lily-of-the-valley, and yellow clintonia whose leaves look confusingly like those of orchids. The well-named gay-wings has a flower which looks confusingly like a miniature cattleya orchid, but is actually a polygala. The star-flower is actually a primrose and related to our shooting star, although the relationship is not obvious. Then there is the bunch berry whose leaves, flowers and scientific name, (cornus canadensis), reveal its kinship with our flowering dogwood, although it is one of the very lowest growing of plants. There are many shrubs, of course; particularly noticeable in boggy areas are members of the heath family, Labrador tea, sheep laurel and various blueberries.

But, as always, orchids top any flower list, and we saw eight species. Certainly one of the unbelievable thrills was to see yellow lady-slipper orchids growing along the roadside, as common as mustard or dandelions. Our field trip to the Upper Peninsula was rather drowned out,(it rained part of every day, but caused no problems otherwise), but the sight of hundreds and hundreds of the orchids, plus the wild callas in the bogs, made it well worth while.

We also saw several patches of huge pink lady slippers (cypripedium acaule , meaning stemless, although to a layman it isn't), in the station area. The journey north, for me, had been somewhat in the nature of a sentimental journey since I had known many of the flowers from our New England springs. Thus I was especially pleased to see c. acaule in full bloom, as beautiful as when I last saw it in our Wilbraham woods.

In some ways, however, the smaller orchids were even more exciting since they were 'life species'. On Lake Michigan, not far from the Station, is Wilderness State Park, a wonderland for orchid seekers. Here were two coralroots, the showy tall corallorhiza striata, and the small greenish c. trifida. There were two plants in leaf only, the uncheckered rattlesnake plaintain (goodyera oblongifolia), and a strap-leaved habenaria which has to remain anonymous, since it was still in minimal bud. The outlandish Calypso orchid grows in a sandy area, only a few feet into the woods from the lake shore, very unlike the 8000 foot Colorado habitat where I first saw it last summer. And finally, along the Big Stone Trail, we found the ramshead orchid (cypripedium arietinum), which Peterson describes as "a small rare lady-slipper". Since it was new also for Lil and Peg we felt it had to be rare indeed.

I could give a better report on two days worth of meetings had I less to report about the birds and flowers. Somehow we felt that hearing papers on "Bio-energetic Control of Latitudinal Distribution in the House Sparrow" or "Preliminary Observation of Barn Swallow Energetics" was less alluring than exploring this very special area. We did attend one symposium, however-- and this brings me back where I started - to the Kirtland's warbler.

We had stopped at Grayling on the way up, and thanks to excellent instructions from the town librarian we had the pleasure of hearing and seeing one of those 200 singing males in prime nesting territory. We also encountered William F. Shake from the U.S. Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, who wasn't at all pleased to see us. He told us about it on the roadside (politely but firmly) and later at the Conference we heard him discuss 'us' as one of the three problems the Kirtland's has to cope with.

The first problem is of its own creation, its extreme fussiness about its nesting area. It requires Jack pines no more than 18 feet tall with lower branches well needled so that they conceal the nest the warblers build under them. A program of controlled burning is used in several U.S. and state forest reserves to produce such habitat.

The worst villain in the life of the Kirtland's is the cowbird which seems to fancy them above all other birds in the area as egg-and-baby-sitters. One cowbird egg in a nest means there is only a 50-50 chance of any warbler fledging. Two such eggs, and no young warblers will make it past the larger, stronger and earlier-hatching intruders. Mr. Shake directs an extensive program of cowbird trapping which is having some success in eliminating them from the area.

And then there is that third problem Mr. Shake and his fellow workers would like to bring under control--the birder. They understand the desire to see the Kirtland's, and indeed, accept the motivation of the 'life-list'. However they have no sympathy at all for the birder who feels he must have a Kirtland's on his list each year--nor is there any encouragement for individual photographers. They are right, of course. The birder <u>is</u> an intruder who upsets the singing males in particular, and may inadvertantly lead to the destruction of a precious nest. Although I'm glad we saw the bird, if we had understood the situation as we do now we wouldn't have gone into the area on our own. The Michigan Department of Natural Resourses has a station at Grayling, and had we stopped there we probably would have been able to go out to see the bird with an escort--or told to wait for a group trip. The authorities don't want to close the area to birders, but fear it may have to be done unless self-discipline is accepted. They also have slides for sale to substitute for the pictures the individual should not take.

Mea culpa, Kirtland's, and please accept our apologies. You are a beautiful, very special bird, and we enjoyed seeing you, but our paths won't cross again!

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Footnote : For some time I've been bothered by the birder's fixation on the numbers game. We sound like a bunch of golfers with our attempts to break 600 for a life-list, 200 for a year-list, or 100 for the day. I know it's a good game and I've been as guilty as anybody (see page for example), but maybe it's time to give up this obsession. We ought to be more concerned with increasing our knowledge about birds. For example, only two or three of us participate in the breeding bird census, and many more of us should be doing it. Also, we've made a start in teaching others, but we need to do more of this and less worrying about our own lists.

As we operate now we sometimes seem to risk 'loving a bird to death'. I remember a recent trip when we chased a singing grasshopper sparrow all over a field so that everyone could list it, ignoring the possibility that we might step on its nest or that of the frantic horned lark that hovered near by. Chasing birds out of nesting season may be okay, but let's declare a moratorium on nesting areas in season, and let's be very judicious about our use of taped songs.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS 1974 - 1975

The dates for this interesting series have been scheduled as follows:

November 1, 1974 Tom Sterling, Footloose in Newfoundland;

November 29, 1974 John Rendall, Lion at World's End;

February 7, 1975 James Hammond, Malheur: Marsh, Meadow and Mountain;

March 21, 1975 Harry Pederson, Four Fathom World;

May 9, 1975 Henk Kegel, Animaux Sauvages (Wild Animals).

Mark your calendar now for these Friday evenings. The films will be shown as usual, at 8:15 at the Ethical Society and are free to the public. Further information in September.

calendar

SATURDAY, August 10, 8 a.m. WGNSS BIRDING FIELD TRIP. West County Shopping Center I-244 and Manchester. Meet under the Dove. Bring lunch.
SUNDAY, August 11, 10 a.m. AUDUBON NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY WALK. Missouri Botanical Garden Arboretum, Gray Summit, Mo. Meet at main gate. Bring linch. Leader Charles Hill.
SATURDAY, August 24, 8 a.m. WGNSS BIRDING FIELD TRIP. West County Shopping Center, I-244 and Manchester. Meet under the Dove. Bring lunch.
For further information call Rose Ann Bodman 961-2883 or Helen Bowman 531-1728

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white sand soaks the gooey pigment
killing shell life as humans rush
to aid the helpless birds slip
to a squishy fall on oil glob straw
while attempting to hold and remove
from cells and tissues
soil permeating plastered feathers

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from man's greedy efforts for more
always more causing oilslick
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possibly bringing to extinction
many of our shore birds

do we want our children
to know them only by pictures ?

Mya Kern Pasek

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